United Nations S/2008/443

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 July 2008

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

I. Introduction

1. The present report, which covers the period from April to June 2008, is submitted pursuant to paragraph 21 of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), by which the Council requested me to report every 90 days on progress made in the implementation of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the status of the political process.

2. Given that this will be the final report before the Security Council considers the renewal of the UNAMID mandate, I have included a number of observations regarding the last 12 months of the Operation's work, as well as some recommendations for the way forward.

II. Ceasefire and the situation on the ground in Darfur

A. Security situation

3. The last three months have been a turbulent period in Darfur, especially following the 10 May attack by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) on Omdurman, which led to increased military activity throughout Darfur and resulted in the suspension of diplomatic relations between Chad and the Sudan. The attack, which lasted from 10 to 12 May, reportedly involved some 1,000 JEM fighters and resulted in dozens of casualties and hundreds of arrests.

4. At the end of April and in early May, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) undertook a bombing campaign in Northern Darfur. On 1 May, UNAMID received reports that an SAF Antonov aircraft bombed Umm Sidr village (100 km north of El Fasher), killing two persons and wounding eight. On 4 May, a market in Shegeg Karo, 70 km north of Umm Baru, was bombed, resulting in several civilian casualties. The air strikes in Northern Darfur and in the northern corridor of Western Darfur during the first week of May killed a total of 19 civilians, including children, women and elderly persons.

5. A dramatic increase in carjackings, in particular along the main supply routes through Southern Darfur, also contributed significantly to insecurity and impeded the delivery of humanitarian aid into the region. During the month of April,

18 United Nations/non-governmental organization vehicles were carjacked; that figure rose to 31 vehicles during the month of May.

Chad-Sudan border

6. Tensions remained high along the Chad-Sudan border, in particular in the period following the attack on Omdurman and the subsequent deterioration of relations between the two countries. During the reporting period, a substantial build-up of SAF and Chadian Armed Opposition Groups (CAOG) elements was observed along the border. On 13 June, CAOG forces seized the towns of Goz Beida and Adé in Chad, only to be driven out of the towns by Chadian regular forces on the following day. Owing to the unstable security situation in the area, non-governmental organizations south of El Geneina were temporarily relocated. A recent summary of the Friends of the Dakar Agreement has included proposals to strengthen the Chad-Sudan border controls. It is too early to comment on whether or when they will be implemented.

B. Activities of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

7. During the reporting period, UNAMID worked consistently to increase its presence throughout the region, develop its capacity to monitor and verify reported incidents and move equipment, supplies and personnel into the mission area. UNAMID was confronted with a number of obstacles in this regard, owing principally to the challenges created by continuing insecurity in the area of operations. In particular, the lack of security along the main supply routes into Darfur has been an issue to which UNAMID has had to devote significant attention. The 29 April hijacking of two UNAMID containers holding contingent-owned equipment for the Chinese Engineer Company in Nyala underscored the security challenges involved in transporting goods overland to Darfur. Following the hijacking, UNAMID immediately commenced a search for the containers and has made every effort to follow all possible leads, without success. The Operation also established a board of inquiry to review the incident. Its findings will be used to inform ongoing efforts so as to improve security of UNAMID convoys. In the meantime, in response to the incident, and taking note of the frequent hijacking of World Food Programme (WFP) and other vehicles along the main supply routes, UNAMID has taken a number of steps towards providing consistent protection for all UNAMID convoys.

8. To assess the security of the different supply routes and to test these protection measures, a UNAMID police convoy consisting of 24 vehicles travelled from El Obeid in Southern Kordofan to Nyala on 14 June and safely transported vehicles and equipment into the mission area. The route was in extremely poor condition, causing frequent delays during the five-day journey, and will soon become worse with the onset of the rainy season. The trial run constitutes the first of many planned protected convoys designed to bring critical equipment, supplies and fuel into Darfur in order to allow for deployment of troops as quickly as possible.

9. In response to the ongoing instability in Western Darfur, where reports of a build-up of CAOG and SAF continued throughout the reporting period, UNAMID has developed a plan to conduct at least three long- and short-range patrols, together

with two night patrols from every company location to internally displaced persons camps throughout the sector each week.

10. In addition to enhancing force presence in volatile areas, the increased number of patrols of roads and villages will improve information gathering and situational awareness. This will result in improved targeting of patrol activities and further improve area security. However, in the most insecure areas, the limited infantry capabilities remain largely absorbed by force protection tasks and escorts. Using the infantry companies to protect the local population, main supply routes and humanitarian space will continue to pose competing priorities. Owing to the deteriorating situation, substantial improvement of area security can only be expected once the additional infantry battalions are deployed and all existing battalions are manned and equipped to United Nations standards.

11. UNAMID continues to increase its police patrol presence throughout Darfur. As indicated in my first quarterly report, UNAMID police initiated a three-phase plan for patrolling camps for internally displaced persons, the third phase of which provides a 24-hour presence in the camps. Patrols are currently undertaken daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in nearly all locations and the Police Commissioner continues to work towards the second phase of patrolling, which will take place from 8 a.m. to midnight. Progress in this regard is being hampered by the lack of reliable communications equipment (personal radios) and the limited presence of formed police units, which are required to provide the necessary protection.

12. UNAMID police took forward several key tasks during the period under review, especially in the areas of confidence-building and monitoring throughout Darfur, as well as training and capacity-building for Government police in order to ensure that policing meets internationally accepted human rights standards. Priority is being given to training the local police in due process and in methods for investigating gender-based violence, with particular emphasis on promoting the human rights of women and children. A major current initiative involves the development of "train the trainer" programmes designed to make the local police force self-sufficient in conducting its own training courses. In addition, criminal investigation units have been established at UNAMID headquarters to monitor reported criminal activity.

13. The Rule of Law Office in UNAMID has initiated its operations in Darfur and will be increasing its capabilities in the coming months. As part of its initial efforts, the Office is conducting outreach with a number of local stakeholders, including the judiciary, the police and the Ministry of Justice. A referral framework is being developed by the Rule of Law Unit in order to ensure that urgent and immediate needs of the local community can be referred to partner offices and agencies as the Office establishes its presence in Darfur.

14. During the reporting period, the UNAMID Humanitarian, Recovery and Development Liaison Section extended its field coverage to all three sectors, commenced work in HIV/AIDS and child protection, and liaised with other substantive sections, such as Human Rights, Political Affairs and Civil Affairs.

III. Humanitarian situation

15. Since the start of the year, approximately 190,000 persons have been displaced in Darfur and ongoing violence throughout Darfur continued to force the displacement of civilians during the reporting period. Clashes between the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM) forces and the Sudan Liberation Army-Free Will forces (SLA-FW) in Northern and Southern Darfur resulted in the displacement of more than 90,000 civilians during the reporting period. Shootings and the burning of the market and dwellings of internally displaced persons in Tawila by Government troops on 13 May, in retaliation for the killing of a soldier, temporarily displaced some 20,000 persons.

16. Since the start of the year, eight humanitarian aid workers have been killed, 125 humanitarian vehicles have been hijacked, 117 humanitarian personnel have been temporarily abducted and 36 WFP-contracted drivers are still missing.

17. Negotiations continue between WFP and the Government to provide escorts into Darfur every 48 hours, as agreed at the Sudan Consortium, held from 5 to 7 May 2008. At the same time, humanitarian actors are working with UNAMID to take forward protected humanitarian convoys, though UNAMID faces similar threats to its supply pipeline.

18. Owing to the violence targeting the humanitarian community, in particular WFP-contracted convoys, food aid was halved starting on 1 May 2008. In addition, a very poor crop harvest in Southern and Northern Darfur has led to an expanded "hunger season", when the supply of cereals and other food items has been dramatically reduced. Many implementing partners are reporting evidence of worsening malnutrition and increasing caseloads in therapeutic feeding programmes.

19. The ability of the 16,500 aid workers in Darfur to provide essential humanitarian assistance is being hindered by additional bureaucratic restrictions. For example, in Western Darfur, local government authorities refused to allow non-governmental organizations to transport medical supplies in rented vehicles, despite the clear need to use such vehicles to effectively respond to the size and scope of relief needs. In Nyala, Southern Darfur, local authorities hindered the delivery of fuel required to power water pumps for the populations of the Kalma and Beliel camps. In Zalingei, Western Darfur, the limitation by Government officials of water pump and generator usage for essential services such as health clinics and hospitals further weakened relief operations. In Northern and Southern Darfur, National Security personnel routinely refused helicopter access to rural communities. In addition, two national staff working with United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations were detained, in direct violation of the joint communiqué on the facilitation of humanitarian assistance in Darfur. One of the staff members was immediately released, while one continues to be held in detention. In spite of concerted efforts to address issues through the High-level Committee to monitor the implementation of the joint communiqué at the national level, practical implementation in the field remained challenging.

20. Coordination mechanisms between the United Nations country team and UNAMID are being established through Inter-Agency Standing Committee meetings at the State level. In addition, the joint Darfur security management team has enhanced communication on security issues pertaining to humanitarian operations

and regular visits to Darfur by the country team strengthened coordination with UNAMID senior management. The coordination will be further enhanced by the arrival of the incoming Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, who will be based in El Fasher to ensure effective strategic collaboration between UNAMID and the humanitarian community.

IV. Human rights situation

21. Human rights and humanitarian law continue to be violated by State and non-State actors. Across Darfur, civilians continue to bear the brunt of increased violence and growing insecurity as a result of recurrent fighting by the warring parties and military action by the Government. The killing and suffering of civilians during attacks on villages underscore the failure of all warring factions to distinguish between civilians and military targets, in violation of existing ceasefire arrangements and international law.

22. Incidents of indiscriminate targeting of civilian communities by Government forces continued in Northern Darfur. The most significant of these incidents occurred on 12 May, when members of the Sudanese Central Reserve Police attacked the internally displaced persons camp in Tawila. The policemen surrounded the camp, opened fire indiscriminately, looted and burned huts and destroyed the market. An estimated 20,000 persons living in the camps were displaced to neighbouring villages. A large number of them took refuge in the UNAMID camp in Tawila for several days.

23. Hostilities between rebel factions also continued to cause civilian casualties and mass displacement of communities. In Northern Darfur, repeated clashes between SLA-MM and SLA-FW took a deadly toll on the residents of a number of villages near Kafod. On 21 May, SLA-MM fighters attacked and destroyed three villages believed to be strongholds of SLA-FW, killing 12 civilians. Most of the victims were reportedly burned alive in their huts.

24. Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence remains widespread in Darfur. Women and girls, in particular among internally displaced persons, continue to be subjected to rape, gang rape, beatings and other forms of violence by State actors, signatory and non-signatory rebel factions and other armed groups. Measures taken by the Government to address the pervasive and persistent incidents of sexual violence in Darfur and the culture of impunity in which they occur have yet to yield significant positive results.

25. Following the recent attack on Omdurman by JEM, Government security agencies in Darfur arrested and detained a number of individuals, apparently on suspicion of involvement in the attack. There is concern that some of the arrests may have been based on perceived individuals' ethnic origins rather than a demonstrated involvement in the attack. Some of the detainees were reportedly subjected to ill-treatment. UNAMID has confirmed that Government agencies in El Geneina arrested at least 13 persons since 10 May, the majority of whom are from the Zaghawa tribe. Some of the detainees were held incommunicado without charge or access to lawyers and family members and without being presented before a judicial authority.

26. On a positive note, the reporting period has witnessed increased cooperation between the Government and UNAMID towards the implementation of recommendations made by a group of United Nations human rights experts on Darfur. The Government agency responsible for human rights and humanitarian issues held several meetings with UNAMID with a view to promoting and prioritizing the implementation of the said recommendations. The reporting period also witnessed the resumption in the activities of some of the institutional frameworks established to combat gender-based violence.

V. Deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur

27. As of 18 June, the total strength of UNAMID was 11,359 personnel. That figure included 9,479 uniformed personnel, comprising approximately 7,818 military personnel, 1,661 police officers, 1 formed police unit and 1,880 civilians.

28. The deployment of troops in Darfur has been substantially delayed by the continued insecurity, the slow pace of readying deployment sites to receive the police and military units, the lack of equipment to bring former infantry battalions of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) up to United Nations size and standards, and the numerous logistical challenges associated with transporting equipment and supplies into the mission area.

29. The slow movement of contingent-owned equipment into the mission area is principally influenced by three factors: (a) the distance from Port Sudan to Darfur (over 2,000 km to Darfur's eastern border); (b) the capacity of local contractors to move the thousands of items of contingent-owned equipment overland from Port Sudan to the mission area; and (c) the limitations of the infrastructure in Darfur, in particular the poor quality of the roads and the capacity of the airports to accept incoming cargo aircraft.

30. As a result of related delays, the only deployment to be completed since the transfer of authority has been the Egyptian Signals Company, which deployed in May 2008. This company was able to deploy in a timely manner owing to its self-sustaining capabilities and the fact that it only required four containers of contingent-owned equipment to be brought into the mission area.

31. There has been some progress in the creation of the Nyala supercamp and the deployment of forces there. Sufficient contingent-owned equipment for the Chinese Engineer Company has now arrived at the Nyala supercamp for the advance party to build the main body's accommodation, and the main body is expected to arrive in July. Owing to delays in the transportation of contingent-owned equipment for the Egyptian Transport Company and the Bangladeshi Multi-Role Logistics Company, however, those units are not expected to arrive in Nyala until late August.

32. As of 15 June, a large portion of the contingent-owned equipment for the Egyptian Engineer Company had arrived in El Fasher, where the Company is due to deploy in July. Much of the equipment was damaged en route to El Fasher, however, and the deployment date of the company will depend upon the ability of the maintenance party to repair it quickly.

33. The final contingent-owned equipment for the Ethiopian Transport Company and the Ethiopian Multi-Role Logistics Company arrived in Port Sudan in late April; however, 72 per cent of the contingent-owned equipment is still in Port Sudan awaiting movement into the mission area.

34. Preparations to receive the first Egyptian Infantry Battalion in Um Kadada and the first Ethiopian Battalion in Kulbus are also behind schedule. The advance party of the Egyptian Battalion is expected to deploy by the end of July and that of the Ethiopian Battalion is expected to move forward in July. The Operation is also using all means possible to accelerate the movement of the Ethiopian contingent-owned equipment to Kulbus in order to permit the deployment of the main body before October 2008.

35. The contingent-owned equipment of the Nepalese and of the Indonesian formed police units has arrived at Port Sudan and the main bodies are expected to deploy by August provided the equipment is transported in time and the land required for the Indonesian formed police units is provided.

36. Since the signing of the status-of-forces agreement on 9 February 2008, the leadership of UNAMID has been meeting regularly with senior Government officials and continues to engage them on issues including freedom of movement across Darfur, security of convoy and supply routes, land acquisition for construction sites, airport operations, customs and issuance of visas. In the last meeting between the Government of the Sudan and UNAMID leadership, which took place on 16 June 2008, the Government gave its agreement to extend airport operating hours by an additional two hours, create a local technical committee that will address any technical problems, cooperate on security of convoys and supply routes and expedite customs clearances and issuance of visas. Sustained cooperation from the Government will continue to be integral to the success of deployment efforts.

37. A major support issue that will have a significantly negative impact on UNAMID deployment relates to the commercial contractor which is constructing accommodations and other critical infrastructure for the Operation. The contractor is far behind schedule and has not performed as expected. In order for it to meet its obligations and complete critical preparations for deployment, a major acceleration of its work will be required. Otherwise, there will be serious negative consequences for our deployment efforts, including a reduction in the Operation's capacity to absorb new military and police units, as well as civilian staff.

38. The Department of Field Support, in consultation with UNAMID, is developing a contingency plan to augment critical engineering capacity and address outstanding engineering requirements. Stopgap measures, including greater use of local and regional contractors and a greater reliance on engineering assets transferred from other missions are being examined. However, all options have inherent challenges and limitations, and will require time to put in place.

39. The force continues to lack a number of critical capabilities, including the majority of the military utility helicopters and a limited number of tactical helicopters to complement those offered by Ethiopia; a small fixed-wing air reconnaissance unit; a multi-role logistics company; and a transport company. The helicopters are critical to project the force to volatile areas and to provide protection to UNAMID personnel, humanitarian operators and the local population. It will also

allow the Operation to operate in areas where UNAMID does not maintain continuous ground presence. The fixed-wing reconnaissance aircraft are essential to provide UNAMID with a better situational awareness and early warning capacity. The necessity for these capabilities was underscored by the JEM attack on Omdurman, in which a number of vehicles travelled from Darfur to Omdurman undetected. The logistics company is needed to assist in building critical infrastructure for the force in the challenging environment of Darfur. The transport company will provide second line medium and heavy transport in support of the logistics detachment to the deployment sites throughout the region.

40. As part of the Secretariat's ongoing efforts to ensure the maximum possible deployment of UNAMID personnel, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, Susana Malcorra, visited the Operation from 14 to 22 June. During her visit, she reviewed in detail the steps required for the Operation to accelerate movement of contingent-owned equipment and respond to engineering challenges.

41. In the meantime, the United Nations and the African Union continue to work together closely to address the range of challenges the two organizations are facing with regard to the deployment of the Operation. To this end, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, and Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support, Jane Holl Lute, travelled to Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, where they were joined by Joint Special Representative Rodolphe Adada for consultations with the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, in the margins of the thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union. These senior officials then met jointly with a team from the Government of the Sudan, who travelled to Sharm El Sheikh specifically for discussions with the African Union and the United Nations on the deployment of UNAMID.

42. During these discussions, the Sudanese representatives reiterated the Government's commitment to the deployment of UNAMID. The African Union-United Nations team emphasized the importance of Government cooperation and support in a few key areas: expeditious movement of contingent-owned equipment into Darfur (including the provision of security for convoys); the provision of land for camps; and the facilitation of engineering activities. Sudanese Government representatives also reported that UNAMID contingent-owned equipment convoys would be permitted to take place every 24 hours from El Obeid to Darfur. This is an increase from the previous Government provision for one convoy every 48 hours. The Government team also emphasized that instructions had been given to local officials regarding the importance of providing UNAMID with required sites.

43. The African Union and the United Nations will continue to conduct high-level consultations on Darfur on a regular basis to ensure continued coordination between the two organizations.

VI. Financial arrangements

44. The General Assembly, by its resolution 62/232 A, authorized the establishment of a special account for UNAMID and appropriated the amount of $1,275.7 million for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, an equivalent of $106.3 million per month, for its establishment. In addition, by its resolution

62/232 B, the Assembly appropriated the amount of $1,499.7 million for the maintenance of UNAMID for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009.

45. As of 31 May 2008, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNAMID amounted to approximately $345.1 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as of the same date amounted to $1,759.7 million.

46. Reimbursement of troop- and police-contributing Governments for troop and formed police unit costs has been made for the period up to 31 May 2008, including reimbursement of troop costs associated with contingent personnel deployed to the African Union Mission in the Sudan for the period from 1 October to 31 December 2007 in accordance with paragraph 5 (a) of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007).

VII. Political process

47. Despite the efforts of the two Special Envoys, the political process for Darfur appears to be at a standstill. The road map developed by the Special Envoys one year ago has reached an impasse, as the parties have not shown a genuine commitment to moving forward. After more than a year of strenuous efforts to bring the movements to a common position and to engage with the Government to identify additional concessions that might rejuvenate the peace process, the parties continue to resort to violence rather than a political solution to the conflict.

48. The prospect for immediate, all-inclusive and substantive peace talks has in fact decreased during the period of review, owing to the fragmentation of the movements (including the dissolution of the United Resistance Front (URF) into three separate groups), the deteriorating security situation, the absence of trust and cohesion between and within the parties, the renewed crisis between Chad and the Sudan exacerbated by the JEM attack on Omdurman and a general absence of political will to cease hostilities and resume negotiations.

49. The JEM attack on Omdurman represented a major development in the conflict in Darfur and for the Sudan as a whole. It demonstrated the continued inability of the parties to the conflict to settle their differences at the negotiating table rather than by force. I am particularly concerned by reports of child soldiers among the JEM combatants in Omdurman, in clear violation of international law. My office is pressing for the release of the children detained by the Government during the attack and I condemn the use of child soldiers in all instances.

50. In addition to exacerbating the tension between Chad and the Sudan, the JEM attack significantly hampered the political process in Darfur, not only because of the escalation of violence that ensued, but also as a result of the Government's resolve not to negotiate with JEM, which it now brands a terrorist organization.

51. Owing to the lack of meaningful progress in the political process, the Special Envoys decided on an incremental approach, outlined in the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Way Forward, which earmarked a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary step. This was in recognition of the fact that ongoing clashes and the deterioration of the security environment have serious negative implications for the humanitarian situation and the political process. The meeting with the regional and international partners, which was convened by the Special Envoys in Geneva on

17 and 18 March, also agreed that the amelioration of the security situation was of paramount priority.

52. The cessation of hostilities is an essential step to demonstrate goodwill and put in place the conditions for improved humanitarian activities. In order for the cessation of hostilities to occur, however, the parties must agree that the conflict in Darfur can only come to an end through a negotiated peace agreement.

53. I am encouraged by the agreement in June between SLA-Unity and the remaining elements of URF to unite their movements in July. Other reports of rapprochement between SLA-Unity and JEM could indicate that the movements might begin to coalesce if the right conditions are created.

54. The meeting in Geneva in March underscored the importance of sustained engagement with the people of Darfur through civil society, including women and youth. In this respect, the mediation team, through mechanisms established by UNAMID, has continued to harness the views of the civil society organizations, internally displaced persons and the leaders of the native administration. The selection process of civil society representatives has also intensified. The purpose remains not only to select representatives for indirect involvement in the talks, but also to engage the different constituencies on more substantive issues and prepare them to act as the political platform for the implementation of any subsequent peace agreements. The newly appointed Joint African Union-United Nations Chief Mediator, Djibril Bassolé, will take these initiatives forward as he conducts the mediation efforts in the Sudan on a full-time basis. Mr. Bassolé brings extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy and mediation to his new and challenging assignment.

VIII. Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement

55. Implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement continues to be largely ignored by the parties on the ground and is further hindered by the refusal of non-signatories to recognize the mechanisms put in place by the Agreement. Violations of the ceasefire agreements occur frequently, by all parties to the conflict, and the Ceasefire Commission continues to be unable to investigate and monitor incidents on a formal basis, as the Joint Commission still has not met to agree to a new structure for the Ceasefire Commission.

56. The Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund, created at the Sirte talks in 2007, has begun its work to promote community-level peacebuilding in Darfur. In early June, the Fund Steering Committee, including representatives from the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue Commission, conducted a visit to Western Darfur, where they met with stakeholders in order to explain the Fund process and help identify projects for funding. Similar visits were conducted to Northern and Southern Darfur earlier in the year and the Fund recently approved funding for two peacebuilding and reconciliation projects in Darfur.

57. The Darfur-Darfur Dialogue Commission provided assistance to a four-day equestrian festival held in El Daien, Southern Darfur, from 30 May to 2 June. The festival brought together participants from a broad spectrum of Darfur tribes, including senior leaders from the Rizeigat, Fur, Fellata and Zaghawa tribes, who were joined by scholars, activists, editors and leading figures from the cultural

community across the Sudan. The festival provided a traditional platform for tribal leaders to meet UNAMID senior staff and to engage in dialogue, mediation and reconciliation.

IX. Implications of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Darfur

58. The Sudan's fifth population and housing census was carried out from 22 April to 6 May 2008. In Darfur, the census operation went ahead despite opposition of both non-signatories and signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement, a majority of internally displaced persons in SLA-Abdul Wahid camps and SLA-Minni Minawi. Government officials reported a success rate of 85 per cent in Western Darfur and 90 per cent in Northern and Southern Darfur. However, UNAMID was unable to verify this information. Internally displaced persons resisted enumeration in a number of camps and enumerators were unable to reach many areas throughout Darfur owing to prevailing insecurity. These areas were primarily on the border with Chad and in Southern Darfur, where rebel movements threatened enumerators and clashes between the Zaghawa and Birgid tribes occurred.

X. Observations and recommendations

59. I am deeply disappointed by the lack of progress that has been made towards resolving the Darfur conflict. The parties continue to pursue the path of military confrontation instead of dialogue, the deployment of UNAMID is far behind schedule, sexual and gender-based violence continues with impunity and heightened insecurity and banditry have severely hampered our ability to provide life-sustaining humanitarian assistance to nearly 2.5 million civilians in need.

60. The parties must come to the realization that violence will not achieve the objectives they seek in Darfur. Continued hostilities will only serve to prolong the suffering of innocent civilians, who have made clear time and again that they wish to return to their homes in a secure environment, knowing that their futures are protected by a credible and inclusive peace agreement.

61. Even as we take action to address the situation — by encouraging the parties to cease hostilities and come to the negotiating table, by deploying UNAMID and by providing humanitarian assistance on a massive scale — the situation in Darfur is becoming more entrenched. The parties continue to pursue military means and have not created the conditions necessary for the resumption of dialogue. Rampant banditry and hijackings throughout Darfur have significantly hindered the movement of humanitarian workers and vital relief items. As a result, the international community struggles to perform even the most basic work to protect civilians and bring them humanitarian assistance in this harsh and difficult environment.

62. Tensions between Chad and the Sudan and the suspension of diplomatic relations between the two countries should also be highlighted as a source of considerable instability in Darfur and volatility on both sides of the border region. The efforts of the Dakar Agreement contact group to lessen the tensions between the Sudan and Chad, as well as the important work of Jean Ping, Chairman of the

African Union Commission, to relaunch contact between the States, have been vital in promoting dialogue between the two States. The Contact Group last met on 9 June 2008 in Brazzaville and will meet again on 17 July 2008 in Dakar. Peace in Darfur is inextricably linked to peace and stability in the region and I count on all stakeholders to do their utmost to assist Chad and the Sudan in their implementation of the Dakar Agreement, as well as those agreements that preceded it.

63. We must also keep sight of the Darfur conflict in the context of the national framework. I am hopeful that the people of Darfur can eventually see their concerns expressed through an electoral process and that the means for finding a peaceful resolution of the conflict will be accelerated.

64. The newly appointed Chief Mediator will face the enormous challenge of having to take all of these complicating factors into consideration as he works to reinvigorate the peace process. His continuous presence in Darfur will play a critical role in helping the movements coalesce around political platforms, encouraging a cessation of hostilities and moving the process towards inclusive negotiations. However, his appointment will not be sufficient; his success will hinge to a large extent on the will of the parties to resolve their differences through dialogue and, no less significantly, the full and unconditional support of the international community.

65. I would like to express my deep appreciation for the efforts of Special Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, who have worked to reinvigorate the peace process and bring the parties back to the negotiating table. The Special Envoys for Darfur will remain available for advice and engagement with the political process, as required.

66. In the meantime, it is critical that we press forward to maximize deployment of UNAMID throughout the remainder of this year. As we do so, there will necessarily be a period in which the majority of the Operation's resources will be focused on creating the conditions required for deployment. This means that, during this initial period, UNAMID will not be in a position to fully implement its mandate or make a robust contribution to solidifying peace in Darfur. Nevertheless, UNAMID will continue to use the resources at its disposal to provide protection for civilians who continue to be affected by the ongoing conflict.

67. In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to all United Nations personnel and humanitarian actors working in Darfur. I also wish to thank Member States, including donor and troop-contributing countries, for their continued support for the deployment of UNAMID and for their efforts to encourage the parties to cease hostilities and return to the path of dialogue.